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General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
55th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 18 December 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 55th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/46/SR.55
8 January 1992

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 116: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) A/46/7/Add.7 and Corr.1; A/C.5/46/33; A/C.5/46/L.13

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the Secretary-General's report on the financial implications of the decisions and recommendations of the Civil Service Commission (ICSC) (A/C.5/46/33) and to the Advisory Committee's report on that item (A/46/7/Add.7 and Corr.1). He proposed that the Committee should take note of those reports.

2. It was so decided.

3. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.13, noting that the decisions taken under sections I to VI were based on the recommendations of the ICSC and that the draft resolution included four additional sections dealing with various other questions. The draft resolution represented a balance between the sometimes conflicting views expressed in informal consultations; he commended it to the Committee for adoption without a vote.

4. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.13 was adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 117: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.14)

5. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.14, pointing out that sections II and III dealt with the two key issues of the pensionable remuneration and pensions of staff in the General Service and related categories and of ungraded officials. The draft resolution represented a delicate balance of the sometimes widely divergent views expressed in informal discussions; he therefore commended it to the Committee for adoption without a vote.

6. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.14 was adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.15 and A/C.5/46/L.17)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.15

7. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana), introducing the draft resolution, pointed out that it consisted of two parts, part A, which dealt with issues relating to the budget and part B, which related to sections of the proposed programme budget. The draft resolution endorsed the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) on changes in the staffing table of the Organization, and asked the Secretary-General to indicate his proposed changes in the organization of the Secretariat, particularly with regard to high-level posts, in revised estimates to be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session. It also endorsed the recommendation of CPC on the convening of a

(Mr. Dankwa, Ghana)

seminar on the methodology used for the preparation of the programme budget. Under section IX of part A, the General Assembly would take note of the adjustment made by the Secretary-General to the preliminary estimates and would decide to set the revised level of the contingency fund at $18 million. Under section X, the General Assembly would decide that a turnover rate of 0.5 per cent should be applied in respect of General Service staff in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. He expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

8. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he wished to confirm his delegation's agreement in large measure with the contents of the draft resolution. However, it still had some difficulties, particularly with regard to paragraph 2 of section XV in part A. It would therefore state its final position when the General Assembly took up the draft resolution in plenary meeting.

9. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that her delegation would also state its final position on the draft resolution in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

10. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.15 was adopted without a vote.

Draft decision A/C.5/46/L.17

11. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico), introducing the draft decision, said that it was the product of an intense process of consultation among delegations. He therefore hoped it would be adopted without a vote.

12. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.15 was adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

Administrative, structural and other aspects of the improvement of the efficiency of the Organization (A/46/633)

13. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, in view of the constraints of time, the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the matter and keep the item under review. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to his proposal.

14. It was so decided.

15. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) asked whether the decision to keep the matter under review meant that it could be taken up at a resumed session of the Committee in early 1992.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that, in his understanding, that was a correct reading of the decision.

Extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations (A/46/545)

17. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the General Assembly should also take note of the report on extrabudgetary resources, contained in document A/46/545, and should defer the matter to the forty-seventh session.

18. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) said that, while her delegation would not stand in the way of the adoption of the decision, it was concerned by the Committee's failure to deal properly with the very important issue of extrabudgetary resources. The issue had only been considered very briefly in the consultations on the programme budget, because delegations had believed it would be taken up substantively when the Secretary-General's report was considered. While Cuba accepted that the Committee's work was affected by constraints of time, it regretted the decision to defer the matter, which was inconsistent with the priorities agreed upon by States.

19. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the reservations expressed by Cuba. Colombia had, for some time, insisted on the need for the Committee to consider the issue of extrabudgetary resources in depth, since such consideration had not been possible in CPC. He still hoped, therefore, that it might be possible for the issue to be considered later at the current session.

20. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), recalling the intention of the Secretariat to develop management and workload analysis techniques and the request by the General Assembly to the Secretary-General to take into account the results of such techniques in the preparation of proposed programme budgets to ensure full implementation of all programmes and activities of the United Nations, as specified in paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 45/254 A, regretted that the Committee had received no report on the item and that it had proceeded to conduct its analysis of the budget on a section-by-section basis, with clearly unsatisfactory results. His delegation hoped that the Secretariat could indicate how it intended to implement the provisions of paragraph 13 of resolution 45/254 A. He suggested that the matter should be deferred to the forty-seventh session and noted that discussion on the item thus remained incomplete. A decision by the General Assembly to defer its discussion of an item, which it had either failed to conclude or not taken up at all, was a procedural matter and should not entail any value judgements. He regretted that, owing to the absence of a particular report, delegations had been asked to disregard an important topic and suggested, therefore, that the matter should be taken up at the resumed session.

21. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the General Assembly should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on extrabudgetary resources (A/46/545) and should defer the matter to a later stage in the current session, taking into account the views expressed by the members of the Fifth Committee.

22. It was so decided.

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the Management Advisory Service of the United Nations (A/46/327)

23. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Committee wished to defer the question of the Management Advisory Service of the United Nations to the forty-seventh session.

24. It was so decided.

Facilities management (A/45/796 and Add.1)

25. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered the report of the Secretary-General on facilities management contained in documents A/45/796 and Add.1 but, owing to the late issuance of the documents, had been unable to examine them during its second session in 1990. As stated in the report, the development of a globally integrated approach to facilities management was central for the administrative and financial efficiency of programme 43, General services, given the magnitude of the investment involved. In the past, programme budget preparation had been based on the immediate maintenance requirements of each location in isolation, without an assessment of global needs within a coordinated programme designed to set priorities and even out over time the potential for "surges" in the need for budgetary appropriations.

26. The Secretary-General noted, however, that the failure to develop an integrated programme meant that those "scattered" appropriations would be used less effectively and that some properties might not receive timely maintenance or necessary repair and technical modernization. Accordingly, a coordinated and integrated approach to facilities management was being formulated.

27. At the same time, the Secretary-General had emphasized that such a programme would require not only coordinated, long-range planning but also adequate financial resources. The properties covered by that programme were the principal properties occupied by the United Nations worldwide, as described in the Secretary-General's report. The report also discussed implications for long-range major maintenance and the modernization of the existing buildings, and outlined the technical, administrative and budgetary basis for a globally integrated and coordinated facilities management policy.

28. The Secretary-General explained that major maintenance requirements varied with the age of buildings, the type of construction, climate and the adequacy of regular budget maintenance programmes. With a reasonably large and diverse building inventory, however, it was possible to propose guidelines for minimum annual levels of expenditure for repair and maintenance on a global basis. The report also noted that in certain countries and organizations the target rate for annual expenditure on buildings was set at 1.8 per cent or 2 per cent of the gross replacement cost of the structures concerned. The anticipated useful life of major building components was also

(Mr. Mselle)

used as a basis for the determination of maintenance expenses. The high level of funding involved in such an approach, however, meant that it was rarely applied in practice.

29. Paragraph 9 of the report set the estimated total value of all land and buildings owned or leased by the Organization at nominal or no cost at approximately $4,339 million, of which $1,652 million represented the current value of the buildings it owned. In paragraph 17, the Secretary-General pointed out that if the 1.8 per cent guideline had been applied, a maintenance budget of $59.6 million, or $29.8 million in annual terms, would have been established for the 1990-1991 biennium, as compared to the actual appropriation of $8.3 million.

30. Soon a substantial number of buildings would pass their theoretical 35- to 40-year "middle-age threshold", after which obsolescence and deterioration accelerated and buildings required increased major maintenance and repairs, and the Secretary-General had concluded that increased difficulties could be predicted over the next few years unless immediate steps were taken by all responsible parties involved to increase their maintenance efforts significantly. That did not mean that the budget planning basis of guideline rates should be taken as a substitute for the careful analysis of special needs and maintenance requirements of each individual facility. The Secretary-General believed, however, that a global maintenance budget substantially and consistently below the guideline rate was clear evidence of chronic underbudgeting and a signal of potential future problems.

31. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the Secretary-General's intention in submitting his report was, in addition to presenting Member States for the first time with an inventory of buildings and properties owned or occupied by the Organization at the principal duty stations, to heighten the awareness of Member States of the need for a coordinated programme of facilities management and to inform them what such a programme would entail in general terms, without making a specific proposal. From paragraph 30 of the report, the Advisory Committee noted that the Secretary-General had intended to elaborate on the programme in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. While that had not proved possible, the Advisory Committee had been informed that work would be completed by the next biennium on priorities in major maintenance and that a systematic plan would be developed by the next medium-term plan.

32. In the meantime, studies were being prepared on the long-term space requirements of the Organization and the cost-effectiveness of existing leased properties, which would help determine the best way of meeting the Organization's current and future requirements. The Advisory Committee welcomed the report which was a very useful compendium of information and a credit to the Secretariat. It contained no specific proposals: those would only be forthcoming by the next biennium. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the report was, rather, the first step towards a more coherent approach to major maintenance. The Advisory Committee accordingly urged the

(Mr. Mselle)

Secretary-General to pursue the studies indicated in his report, with a view to formulating comprehensive and viable proposals regarding the Organization's requirements with respect not only to major maintenance, but also to the related issue of long-term space requirements, in particular at its main duty stations.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Fifth Committee wished to take note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on facilities management in documents A/45/796 and Add.1 and of the relevant comments and observations of the Advisory Committee; to encourage the Secretary-General to continue with the formulation of an integrated and coordinated approach to facilities management, with a view to achieving greater efficiency in the administrative and financial structures of the Secretariat; and to request the Secretary-General to report periodically on specific aspects of the matter as appropriate.

34. It was so decided.

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.16

35. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), introducing the draft resolution, said that the need for the Fifth Committee to rationalize its work had been particularly evident at the current session and that it was vital for the Committee to return to its biennial practice.

36. The preambular part of the resolution emphasized the need to bear in mind the increased workload borne by the Fifth Committee and recalled the Committee's previous practice of following a biennial cycle in its programme of work. The operative part of the resolution accepted the biennial approach, except in respect of those items which were mandated for annual consideration. The draft resolution took as its starting-point the belief that all items susceptible to biennialization should be biennialized. That principle applied to more than half of the items before the Fifth Committee.

37. The annex to the draft resolution detailed the Committee's programme of work, identifying items subject to annual consideration, those to be considered biennially in odd years and those considered biennially in even years. Odd years would focus on the United Nations budget for the next biennium, while even years could be regarded as personnel years. She drew particular attention to footnote 4, which indicated that the United Nations staff list and the statistical report on the composition of the Secretariat would be issued also in odd years for information purposes, and pointed out that they would require no consideration by the General Assembly. Special provision was made for the scale of assessments, which would be subject to consideration as required. Footnote 7 recommended the consideration of that item twice in three years.

38. Part II of the annex set forth the Committee's programme of work for 1992 and 1993, in the light of the biennialization of its work. The 1993 programme would be further updated in 1992.

(Ms. Mustonen, Finland)

39. Noting that the Committee's working methods had changed immensely over the past few years, owing, in particular, to its well-known and time-consuming practice of endeavouring always to reach consensus, she expressed the conviction of her delegation that biennialization of the Committee's work represented an important step towards rationalization. She commended the draft resolution to the Committee for adoption without a vote.

40. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, when the Committee had discussed the report of the Committee on Contributions, the Soviet Union had stated its position regarding the time scale of the proposed scale of assessments and had urged, and continued to urge, adoption of the one-year term proposed by that Committee. For the reasons it had advanced in the course of the general discussion on the item, and in view of the stage of negotiations on the draft resolution on the scale of assessments, which rendered probable the necessity for the item to be considered by the General Assembly during the 1992 session, the Soviet Union wished to add to the list in part II A of the draft resolution, Programme of work for 1992, an additional item 15, Scale of assessments, with the footnote: "Should the need arise." His delegation was convinced that the Department of Conference Services should bear that eventuality in mind and should make appropriate arrangements.

41. Mr. CONMY (Ireland) said that he welcomed the draft resolution, since the Committee's current work practices left much to be desired. With regard to the point raised by the representative of the Soviet Union, he pointed out that, although footnote 7 to section D, paragraph 1, implied that the matter would not be considered at the forty-seventh session, the provisions of paragraph 4 of the resolution meant that the subject could be taken up if the urgency of the situation so required. He therefore appealed to the representative of the Soviet Union to withdraw his amendment and allow the resolution to be adopted.

42. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that he understood the concerns expressed by the representative of the Soviet Union but, like the representative of Ireland, he believed that they were already covered by the provisions of paragraph 4. He therefore asked the representative of the Soviet Union to withdraw his amendment.

43. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that paragraph 4 concerned the submission of reports, whereas he was concerned about an agenda item. It would be useful to have the possibility of dealing with the matter on the 1992 agenda, should that prove necessary.

44. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that he fully supported the resolution and agreed with the remarks made by the representative of Ireland. He pointed out that section D allowed for "consideration as required" and, given that under rule 160 of the rules of procedure the scale of assessments was to be fixed for three years, he felt that the question was adequately covered. Footnote 7, specifying that the General Assembly should consider the matter twice in three years, was to be seen only as a recommendation.

45. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) said that he supported the amendment proposed by the representative of the Soviet Union to include the scale of assessments as part of the programme of work for 1992, in case it proved necessary to consider the matter at the next session. If it proved unnecessary, reference to the item could subsequently be omitted, but it was important that the possibility should remain open. He felt that footnote 7 should be amended to make it clear that it was a recommendation, since as it stood it was in contradiction with the heading to section D.

46. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that, as no decision had yet been taken on the scale of assessments, it was too early to judge whether the matter needed to be taken up the following year. The programme of work for 1992 could be amended in the light of the action the Assembly took at the current session on agenda item 114.

47. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland) said that she agreed with the suggestion made by the representative of Hungary. A revised version of the resolution could be issued if necessary.

48. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation still had doubts. It was not clear how, when and by whom subsequent changes to the programme would be made if an amendment was not included at the current stage. He did not fully understand the procedure involved.

49. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that he understood the concerns expressed by the representatives of the Soviet Union and Mexico. He proposed that it should be indicated in the annex to the draft resolution that the year in which the report of the Committee on Contributions was to be considered would be decided in the resolution on that item.

50. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) proposed that footnote 7 should be deleted, since it was in contradiction with the heading to section D, as the representative of Mexico had pointed out. That would remove the need for any future amendments and would mean that the question of the scale of assessments could be included on the agenda whenever necessary.

51. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the difficulties the Committee was encountering were all related to the failure to resolve the question of the scale of assessments itself. He therefore proposed that the Committee should defer taking a decision on the draft resolution until after the resolution on the scale of assessments had been adopted.

52. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland) endorsed that proposal.

53. The Soviet proposal was adopted.

54. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), speaking on a point of order, drew attention to document A/C.5/46/CRP.1 on the application of workload analysis techniques at the United Nations. He pointed out that neither the Chairman nor the

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

Secretariat had mentioned the document during the introduction to the item. Its contents were important and he proposed that it should be discussed at the resumed session.

55. Mr. TIEWUL (Secretary of the Committee) said that the conference room paper had been issued some time ago. As the documentation for the item under consideration was far from complete, the representative of Japan was quite right to propose that the document should be considered at the resumed session.

56. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) endorsed the proposal made by the representative of Japan.

57. The Japanese proposal was adopted.

58. Mrs. CLIFF (United Kingdom) welcomed the decision but expressed regret that the Fifth Committee had failed to consider all the reports under the item in question. She also regretted the inadequacy of the documentation available, which had made no reference to the implementation of the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations. She looked forward to taking up the reports in question at the resumed session, particularly document A/46/633.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/46/L.55 concerning agenda item 143 (A/C.5/46/78)

59. The CHAIRMAN said that he had been informed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that draft resolution A/46/L.55 had no financial implications. He would take it that the Fifth Committee, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, wished to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/46/L.55, no additional appropriations would be required under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

60. It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

61. The CHAIRMAN said, with reference to agenda item 107, that four matters under the programme budget for 1992 were still outstanding, namely: the report of the Secretary-General on the conditions of service of members of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), contained in documents A/C.5/46/75 and A/C.5/46/17 and Corr.1; the report of the Secretary-General on the International Conference on Population and Development, contained in document A/C.5/46/25 and Corr.1; the report of the Secretary-General on the

(The Chairman)

organization of editorial services, contained in document A/C.5/46/47; and the report of the Secretary-General on reimbursement of accommodation costs, contained in document A/C.5/46/56. He said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to defer consideration of those matters to a later stage.

62. It was so decided.

63. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would take a decision on the consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates at its meeting the following day and, following that decision, would also consider the report of the Fifth Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

64. The Committee would revert to agenda items 118 (United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East), 120 (United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM)) and 122 (Financing of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA)) at its next meeting when the relevant draft resolutions were available in all languages.

65. Mr. MORDACQ (France) underscored the serious delay in reimbursing troop-contributing States, owing to the backlog in United Nations peace-keeping accounts, especially in the case of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Organization had an obligation to pay the full amount due to each country. Even more unacceptable was the delay in United Nations reimbursement of invalidity and death pensions paid out by countries to their nationals who had been injured or killed in defence of peace. Administrative reasons should never come before moral obligations, and it was unconscionable that such reimbursements were not given priority.

66. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Committee had already considered the appropriations for the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) under agenda item 136 and for the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) under agenda item 146. Appropriate draft resolutions would be submitted to the Committee as soon as the texts were available.

67. With regard to the remaining peace-keeping items on the Committee's agenda - items 119 (United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG)), 121 (United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia), 123 (Administrative and budgetary aspects of peace-keeping operations) and 138 (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)) - he suggested that the Committee should recommend that the General Assembly keep those items under review and consider them at a later stage of the forty-sixth session.

68. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) observed that once again the Committee had left item 123 to the very last minute, as though the administrative and financial aspects of peace-keeping were the least important item on the agenda. The preceding day the Committee had expressed anger at the other Main Committees

(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

because they presumed to take decisions on issues within its purview. But the real cause for concern was the Fifth Committee's inaction when another Main Committee had fully respected the former's prerogatives. The Special Political Committee resolution on the question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects, adopted much earlier, was filled with references to the need for the Secretary-General to ensure effective management of peace-keeping operations and a strict control of expenses, and pointed to a number of administrative roadblocks that limited his ability to do so. Clearly the Special Political Committee recommendations required some kind of response.

69. He did not need to remind delegations that the peace-keeping appropriations the Committee was about to approve amounted to some $300 million for the management of operations that had become a very significant part of the Organization's work and were a major reason for the political good will towards the United Nations. In the circumstances, Canada hoped that the plan for the rationalization of the Committee's work proposed by the representative of Finland would in future allow the Committee to give agenda item 123 the importance it deserved. Otherwise the Fifth Committee should not be surprised that it was no longer taken seriously and that other Main Committees did its work for it.

70. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) asked the Secretariat to inquire of the Advisory Committee whether its report on MINURSO would be ready by the end of December.

71. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) proposed that any decision on MINURSO should be deferred until the relevant reports of the Secretary-General and of the Advisory Committee were available.

72. The CHAIRMAN said that he had made his earlier suggestion for that reason. He would therefore take it that the Committee wished to recommend that the General Assembly should keep agenda items 119, 121, 123 and 138 under review and consider them at a later stage of the forty-sixth session.

73. It was so decided.

74. The CHAIRMAN appealed to all members to continue informal consultations so that a decision on the scale of assessments could be taken under item 114 without a vote at the following meeting.

OTHER MATTERS

75. The CHAIRMAN announced that Mr. Mselle had been re-elected to another three-year term as Chairman of the Advisory Committee and congratulated him on his own behalf and on behalf of the members of the Fifth Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
56th meeting
held on
Thursday, 19 December 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 56th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Draft report of the Fifth Committee

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 113: PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.19)

1. Ms. GOICOCHEA (Cuba), speaking in her capacity as coordinator of the informal consultations on agenda item 113, introduced draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.19. Paragraphs 1 to 5 related to the adoption of the calendar of conferences for 1992-1993 and to procedures for adjusting the calendar. Paragraph 3, in particular, dealt with the possible rescheduling of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and paragraph 5 with procedures for dealing with inter-sessional departures by the Council from the approved calendar.

2. The important issue of the utilization of conference-servicing resources by United Nations organs was dealt with in paragraphs 9 to 17. Particular attention was drawn to paragraphs 11 and 12, the understanding being that interpretation services would be provided to the informal consultations in question as available. Paragraph 13 addressed the problem of organs which consistently underutilized conference-servicing resources. Paragraph 17 sought to strengthen coordinated planning of conference-servicing resources, while paragraph 18 called for a consolidated statement on scheduled special conferences. Bodies such as the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, which received conference servicing but not funding from the regular budget, were dealt with in paragraphs 19 and 20. Paragraphs 21 through 23 concerned the system-wide introduction and cost-effectiveness of equipment and new technologies, and the following two paragraphs with control and limitation of documentation. Paragraph 26 called for a task force to review and report on the organizational structure, technological innovations and working methods of the Department of Conference Services, and paragraph 28 for the Committee on Conferences to explore ways of achieving the goal of efficiency and effectiveness. A final paragraph related to possible biennialization of agenda item 113.

3. She recommended that the draft resolution should be adopted by consensus.

4. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.19 was adopted.

5. Mr. DELCORDE (Belgium), speaking in explanation of position, said that his delegation regretted that a firm position had not been taken in the draft resolution in respect of bodies whose conference-servicing utilization factor was consistently very low, such as the Committee on Information, the Disarmament Commission, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean or the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. The duration of meetings of those committees should be shortened accordingly.

6. His delegation had proposed an amendment to that effect in the informal consultations and it deplored the fact that some delegations had preferred to

(Mr. Delcorde, Belgium)

maintain the status quo and leave the Committee on Conferences without guidelines. That Committee should adopt a strong policy on underutilization, which was a flagrant example of waste of United Nations budgetary resources.

7. With those reservations, Belgium had joined the consensus, but might be unwilling to do so in future.

8. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that his delegation had been able to join the consensus precisely because the draft resolution reflected the general view of the Committee. The function of the Committee on Conferences was simply to arrange conference services so that the Organization worked efficiently. It would be a perversion of the mandate of that Committee if it were used to curtail the activities of other bodies or if it were surreptitiously given a budgetary role. Uganda would in future resist all efforts to give the Committee on Conferences any power not envisaged in its mandate.

9. Mrs. CLIFF (United Kingdom) said that her delegation shared many of the concerns expressed by the representative of Belgium. Since the United Kingdom was leaving the Committee on Conferences, it urged it to take seriously the mandate given it in paragraph 28 of the draft resolution regarding implementation of the recommendations of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

The contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/46/81)

10. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered the report of the Secretary-General on the consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates which fell under the guidelines for the use and operation of the contingency fund, contained in document A/C.5/46/81. The total additional requirements to be financed from the contingency fund for the biennium 1992-1993 amounted to $2,762,900. Since that amount was within the $18-million level of the contingency fund for that period, the Secretary-General proposed an appropriation of the full amount required.

11. On the basis of the procedures laid down in General Assembly resolution 42/211, the Advisory Committee had no objection to the Secretary-General's proposal. It therefore recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate an amount of $2,762,900, distributed under the various budget sections as indicated in paragraph 2 of the Secretary-General's statement.

12. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) drew the Committee's attention to an error in paragraph 2 of document A/C.5/46/81. The

(Mr. Baudot)

entry under section 21 should be deleted and the amount indicated under that section should be added to section 23 of the programme budget.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Fifth Committee, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/211, wished to recommend that the Assembly approve additional appropriations in the amount of $2,762,900, under the relevant sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, as indicated in paragraph 2 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/46/81), and to inform the Assembly that a balance of $15,237,100 would remain in the contingency fund.

14. It was so decided.

Revised estimates: effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (A/C.5/46/82)

15. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/46/82) in which he submitted revised estimates resulting from changes in rates of exchange and inflation. As indicated in paragraph 4, the revised rates had been applied to the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 as approved by the Fifth Committee in its first reading, and to all revised estimates and statements of programme budget implications approved to date. However, that did not include the estimated amounts that would arise from the implementation of the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC); those amounts were contained in document A/C.5/46/33 and would be reported on in the Secretary-General's first performance report.

16. The Advisory Committee noted that the December rates had been used in the recosting. In that connection, it had been informed that the use of the December rates resulted in a figure slightly lower than that which would have been obtained by using the average rates for 1991, and was therefore more favourable to Member States. As stated in paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report, the overall effect of the recosting was, in round figures, a net increase of $52.9 million under the expenditure sections and an increase of $46.6 million under the income sections. The increase under the expenditure sections was attributable to increased requirements of $73.6 million in respect of inflation (para. 6), which were partly offset by savings of $20.7 million as a result of currency fluctuations. For each duty station the Secretary-General compared the rates of exchange and inflation which he was now proposing together with those assumed in his initial proposal. He gave a breakdown (para. 7) of the net increase of $52.9 million under the expenditure sections by main item of expenditure, showing that $46.9 million were attributable to staff assessment, while increased requirements under established and temporary posts amounted to $12.3 million.

(Mr. Mselle)

Those increases were partly offset by a reduction of approximately $6.3 million under non-post items.

17. The Advisory Committee noted that the net increase of $12.3 million for costs was due to a decrease of $31 million in view of changes in average levels, which took into account the most recent experience with regard to salaries and rates of common staff costs, more than offset by an increase of $43.3 million reflecting the full cost of inflationary factors on salaries in 1992 and 1993 (para. 8). Major increases had been registered at field missions, Bangkok and Addis Ababa and smaller ones at Geneva and Nairobi, while decreases had been registered at all other locations.

18. The Advisory Committee found no technical basis for objecting to the Secretary-General's revised estimates resulting from the recosting of the effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation, as set out in his report, and accordingly transmitted them to the Fifth Committee for consideration and approval.

19. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) expressed concern over the conditions under which the Fifth Committee was being asked to consider the recosting of the proposed programme budget. With regard to paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/46/82, the General Assembly, in resolution 44/198, had requested the Secretary-General to make all necessary efforts to absorb a significant portion of the additional costs arising in respect of the regular budget as a result of the comprehensive review of the conditions of service of the staff in the Professional and higher categories, to which the Field Service had subsequently been assimilated.

20. Mr. MORDACQ (France) said that he endorsed the observations just made by the representative of the United Kingdom. He found it strange that the Secretary-General should refer in the same paragraph of his report (A/C.5/46/82) to increased requirements in respect of inflation and to the salary increases recommended by ICSC and approved by the General Assembly.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Fifth Committee wished to approve an increase in the amount of $52,894,900 under the expenditure sections and $46,570,300 under the income sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, as indicated in the table in paragraph 5 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/46/82).

22. It was so decided.

Draft report of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/46/L.18)

23. Mr. BARIMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report, said that part I contained introductory material, while part II contained the results of the decisions on individual expenditure and income sections taken by the Committee in first reading. Part II, addendum I,

(Mr. Barimani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

reflected the outcome of the second reading of the proposed programme budget. Part III contained a summary of the Committee's consideration of special subjects. Finally, part IV contained the recommendations of the Fifth Committee in the form of four draft resolutions.

24. Draft resolution I dealt with questions related to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. He wished to point out, however, that there were two omissions in part A of the draft. The first was the proposal made by the representative of the United Kingdom, which had been amended by the representative of Cameroon and approved by the Committee, relating to the effects of inflation and currency exchanges. The second was the proposal made by the representative of Cameroon concerning the role of the Fifth Committee as the organ having responsibility for administrative and budgetary matters. That proposal had also been approved by the Committee. Draft resolution II concerned the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. Draft resolution III dealt with unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1992-1993 and draft resolution IV dealt with the Working Capital Fund for the biennium 1992-1993.

25. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that, with reference to the role of the Fifth Committee, it was his recollection that the representative of Cameroon had withdrawn the draft resolution which he had originally submitted and had agreed that his observations should be reflected in the summary record.

26. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft resolutions I to IV.

Draft resolution I

27. Draft resolution I was adopted.

Draft resolution II

28. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that section C of draft resolution II, which was of great importance to Member States, contained a number of inaccuracies. It was not at all clear, for example, how the figure of $US 33,902,400 in paragraph 1 had been arrived at. He asked the Secretariat to provide corrected figures in due course.

29. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that because of the pressure under which the Secretariat had been required to complete its task some of the figures contained in the draft resolutions before the Committee were not final. The draft resolutions that would be considered by the plenary Assembly, however, would contain the corrected figures. He indicated the figures in section C of draft resolution II which would be replaced by new figures and assured the representative of Japan that any clarifications required would be provided.

30. Mr. MORDACQ (France) said that, while it was natural to expect a document prepared under such constraints of time to contain errors, his delegation, too, had questions concerning certain figures. He was sure, however, that there were technical explanations and would welcome the clarifications promised by the Secretariat.

31. Draft resolution II was adopted.

Draft resolutions III and IV

32. Draft resolutions III and IV were adopted.

33. The draft report of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/45/L.18) as a whole was adopted.

34. Mr. MOOSE (United States of America), explaining his delegation's position on the draft resolutions just adopted, said that the approved budget reflected the agreement reached the previous year on the budget outline and preserved the consensus decision-making process that underlay resolution 41/213. The adoption of the draft resolution by consensus was another important step in rebuilding the confidence of all Member States in the Organization and reflected the significant progress made towards further reform in the Secretariat. It had provided the new Secretary-General with a basis for further restructuring and enhancing programmes and activities, such as the reforms aimed at strengthening the Organization's capacity to respond to the priority needs of Member States.

35. The forty-sixth session had marked an important change in the way in which Member States approached budgetary and management issues at the United Nations. Delegations had adopted a more positive and cooperative approach and efforts had been made to finance new activities through redeployment rather than the appropriation of additional resources. While the Fifth Committee had accepted the Advisory Committee's recommendation for a reduction of $13.3 million in respect of unspent balances, the approved budget level should make further redeployment possible. His delegation shared the Advisory Committee's view that every effort should be made to absorb to the maximum extent possible such additional costs as might arise during the biennium 1992-1993.

36. His delegation had expressed its concern over the calculation of, and budgetary provision for, staff assessment. The United States was the only country to be assessed for that budgetary provision and the substantial increases proposed by the Secretary-General would therefore have a direct impact on the level of his country's contribution. In that connection, he wished to place on record his delegation's continuing objection to the way in which the Secretariat calculated the tax attributable to United Nations salaries for purposes of refunding the staff assessments of employees whose countries taxed their United Nations income. The method of calculation used by the Secretariat resulted in improper payments since they had the effect of subsidizing the non-United Nations income of United Nations staff.

37. Mr. LEV (Israel) reiterated the reservations in respect of the proposed programme budget which his delegation had expressed during the first reading.

38. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the current session had been marked by uncertainty over whether agreement would be reached on the proposed programme budget and even whether funds would be available to finance the activities of the United Nations for the remainder of the year. She therefore welcomed the adoption by consensus of the proposed programme budget. She also noted with satisfaction the increase in appropriations to a number of programmes which were of particular interest to the Nordic countries.

39. With regard to the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee in respect of underutilized balances, she was satisfied with the explanation that the reductions were an ad hoc measure and welcomed, in particular, the Advisory Committee's request to the General Assembly that the cuts should be implemented with due regard for the requirements of Secretariat programmes and services. The Nordic States expected the Secretary-General to distribute the reduction taking into account such factors as the general and specific redeployments approved by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and the need to avoid any adverse impact on programme delivery.

40. The lack of a stable basis for the financing of the expenditures just approved by the Committee remained a major cause of concern to the Nordic countries. They noted with regret that, because of the outstanding contributions of many countries, the financial foundations of the Organization were insecure and the financing of approved activities, including peace-keeping, were thus jeopardized. The Nordic countries hoped that renewed and determined efforts would be made to ensure the credibility and financial viability of the United Nations.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

41. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Fifth Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should revert to agenda item 115 (Personnel questions) at a later stage in the forty-sixth session.

42. It was so decided.

43. Mr. GREALY (Australia) said that during the previous discussions on the item, his delegation, together with those of Canada and New Zealand, had expressed a strong preference for consideration of agenda item 115 to be deferred to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. That position had also been supported by most of the other delegations.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that note would be taken of the observations just made.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
57th meeting
held on
Friday, 20 December 1991
at 11 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 57th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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A/C.5/46/SR.57
10 January 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 146: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ADVANCE MISSION IN CAMBODIA (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.6)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.6

1. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.6 on behalf of the Chairman and recommended it for adoption by the Committee without a vote.

2. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that, according to the cost estimate for the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia, most of the military personnel were to receive a mission subsistence allowance. That appeared to be a departure from established practice, whereby reimbursement was made to troop-contributing States, based on the standard procedures and rates. According to the model agreements between the United Nations and troop-contributing countries, in the case of formed bodies of military personnel who were sent on peace-keeping missions, exceptions to that practice could be made if the troops were not provided with accommodations or meals. In most cases, however, troop contributors were reimbursed at the rate of $988 per person per month. In the case of the Mission in Cambodia, most military personnel, although they would be sent in formed bodies, were to be granted a daily subsistence allowance of $111, or more than $3,300 per month. He wondered whether there had been any change in the Secretariat's policy concerning the standard rates of reimbursement. It was his delegation's understanding that the Advance Mission was part of a larger operation to be launched in 1992; accordingly, the proposed arrangements might set a precedent.

3. Mr. ANNAN (Assistant Secretary-General, Controller) said that there had been no change in policy and that, despite certain peculiarities of the Advance Mission in Cambodia, it would not set a precedent.

4. Mr. HOSANG (Unit for Peace-Keeping Matters and Special Assignments) said that the standard rates of reimbursement had been established by the General Assembly; reimbursement would continue to be made to troop-contributing States unless they indicated to the Secretary-General that they were offering the services of their troops as a voluntary contribution. The allowance in question was intended to cover the food requirements of the Mission personnel, since the Organization was not in a position to provide mess service; it had no connection to the reimbursement arrangements.

5. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) and Mr. AHMED (Iraq) drew attention to drafting errors in paragraphs 14 and 15 of the Arabic version of the draft resolution.

6. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.6 was adopted.

7. Mr. MORDACQ (France), explaining his delegation's position on the draft resolution just adopted, said that two countries had provided large voluntary contributions estimated at $8 million, well in advance of the preparation of the budget for the Mission; without those contributions, the total budget estimate of $14 million would be unrealistic. He urged the Secretariat to ensure that budget figures reflected the real circumstances. It was important that voluntary contributions should be announced at an early stage and that they should be taken into account by the Secretariat in the preparation of budgets for peace-keeping operations.

AGENDA ITEM 136: FINANCING OF THE ACTIVITIES ARISING FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991) (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS IRAQ-KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.7)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.7

8. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Chairman and recommended it for adoption by the Committee without a vote.

9. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.7 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 118: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST (continued)

(a) UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.9

10. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Chairman and recommended it, with minor drafting changes, for adoption by the Committee without a vote.

11. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.9 was adopted.

(b) UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.10

12. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Chairman and recommended it for adoption by the Committee without a vote.

13. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.10 was adopted.

14. Mr. CONMY (Ireland), explaining his delegation's position on the second draft resolution just adopted, said that his Government continued to be concerned at the shortfall in the account of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon as a result of large arrears owed by Member States. Although he welcomed the partial payments made by some Member States, the amounts outstanding were significant and placed an unfair burden on troop-contributing countries, including Ireland.

15. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba), explaining her delegation's position on the two draft resolutions just adopted, said that although Cuba's views concerning the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force remain unchanged, it had decided to join the consensus.

16. Mr. BARIMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran), explaining his delegation's position on the two draft resolutions just adopted, said that, had there been a vote, his country would have abstained, and he wished to place on record its reservations.

AGENDA ITEM 120: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.11

17. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the chairman and recommended it for adoption by the Committee without a vote.

18. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.11 was adopted.

19. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that there was an inconsistency in the texts of all the draft resolutions just adopted, in that they indicated both the net and the gross amounts. He wondered whether it would be possible to correct the texts before they were considered by the General Assembly in plenary meeting.

20. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that the texts had been drafted in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; no errors in methodology had been pointed out so far.

21. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that, while his comments should not be taken as implying any criticism of the coordinator of the consultations on the draft resolutions, his delegation felt that a case could be made for indicating net appropriations and assessments, since for most Member States, the basis of assessment was the net appropriation.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that note would be taken of the previous speaker's statement.

23. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that he not only wished for note to be taken of his statement, but also requested either an indication that the net amounts could be reflected in the texts to be submitted to the General Assembly or, at least confirmation from the Secretariat that the net amounts indicated in the corresponding report of the Advisory Committee (A/46/774) were authoritative.

24. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he supported the proposal made by the United Kingdom representative; his delegation, too, had been aware of the discrepancy, and would have raised the issue if time had permitted.

25. Mr. ANNAN (Assistant Secretary-General, Controller) said that the proposed correction would be reflected in the text to be transmitted to the General Assembly.

AGENDA ITEM 122: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER GROUP IN CENTRAL AMERICA (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.12)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.12

26. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Chairman and recommended it for adoption by the Committee without a vote.

27. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that, as the text of the draft resolution had been submitted only a short time earlier, delegations had not had sufficient time to study it.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.25 p.m.

28. Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.12 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 109: CURRENT FINANCIAL CRISIS OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/46/600 and Add.1, A/46/765; A/C.5/46/CRP.5)

AGENDA ITEM 110: FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/46/600 and Add.1, A/46/765; A/C.5/46/CRP.5)

29. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said that the informal consultations on the financial situation of the United Nations had, unfortunately, failed to produce consensus, owing to the short time available. He believed that, given more time, the Committee would be able to arrive at a substantive resolution on the item. There was consensus, however, on the importance of the issue and he therefore stressed that its consideration should be resumed as soon as possible.

30. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should take up the item again when the forty-sixth session resumed early in 1992. He further proposed that the Fifth Committee should set aside a period of three to four days to allow for a full substantive discussion of the matter. The dates of the resumed session would be made known sufficiently in advance to enable delegations to make the necessary arrangements.

31. It was so decided.

32. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, regretted that the Committee had been unable to take a decision on the financial crisis of the Organization. When the item had been introduced, the Controller had pointed out that the Organization required a better resource base to meet the growing demands which would be made on it in the future. The Controller had noted that the issue of improving the Organization's resources was separate from any current question of short-term cash-flow problems.

33. Australia, Canada and New Zealand did not share the belief of some Member States that the Organization's financial problems were due exclusively to the non-payment or late payment of contributions, but were convinced that, even with full payment of assessments, the Organization's working capital base was insufficient to permit it to respond effectively to new demands.

34. During the general discussion of the item, Canada had urged Member States to work for consensus on at least the less controversial proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report and, in the light of the Advisory Committee's report (A/46/765), had also maintained that the Committee could proceed on the recommendations concerning a reserve account for peace-keeping operations.

35. Unfortunately, some delegations continued to see technical problems in the resolution, which prevented them from taking a decision in principle. It was essential to resolve those problems at the resumed session. In addition, he urged those delegations which saw a direct relationship between problems with the payment of assessments, on the one hand, and the request to increase the reserves, on the other, to give the proposals careful and detached consideration, in the hope that they would rethink their positions and realize the need, in particular, for a peace-keeping reserve fund.

36. He suggested that the issue of the peace-keeping reserve fund should perhaps be separated in the agenda from the overall issue of the Organization's financial crisis, in order that it received the dispassionate attention it deserved.

37. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that his delegation regretted the need to defer the decision on the item. The Secretary-General had been correct in identifying the failure of Member States to pay their assessments as the root cause of the problem. His delegation favoured a resolution that included specific measures to address the problem of the payment of assessments. To increase the Organization's financial reserves without such measures would place an unfair burden on those States that did pay their assessments in full.

38. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) and Mr. CAVAGLIERI (Italy) said that their delegations wished to associate themselves with the reservations expressed by the representative of the Netherlands.

39. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that the issue of the start-up costs of a peace-keeping reserve fund was one of great importance and it should not be dealt with in a hasty or superficial manner. His delegation agreed, however, that there was an urgent need to increase the reserve fund for financing the start-up costs of peace-keeping operations; the problem would not be solved merely by changing the name of the account and transferring resources into it from another account.

40. Mr. MORDACQ (France) said that his delegation supported the reservations expressed by the representative of the Netherlands. He suggested that, when the General Assembly resumed its discussion of the issue, it should consider separating the accounts of the regular budget from peace-keeping accounts. Under the provisions of its draft resolution on the Working Capital Fund for the biennium 1992-1993, contained in document A/C.5/46/L.18 (Part IV) and adopted by the Committee at the preceding meeting, the Secretary-General was authorized to draw from other accounts in his custody, including the account for peace-keeping operations, when the Working Capital Fund was exhausted. The Secretary-General had been obliged to make such arrangements to ensure the short-term financing of the Organization. While France understood the Secretary-General's predicament, it believed that contributions by Member States for peace-keeping purposes should not serve directly for the financing of regular budget expenses and hoped that maintaining separate regular budget and peace-keeping accounts would become an established practice in the future.

AGENDA ITEM 114: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/C.5/46/L.20)

41. Mr. COMMY (Ireland) said that the scale of assessments was of vital importance to the Organization as a whole and to the individual Member States and that each Member State regarded the scale from both points of view. The resolution contained in document A/C.5/46/L.20 was a consensus text, achieved, in the best traditions of the Committee, through a spirit of compromise and accommodation, despite the fact that no delegation had been able to accept all the provisions of the resolution without difficulty.

42. He drew attention, in particular, to the provisions of part B, paragraph 4, requesting the Committee on Contributions to make efforts to minimize the allocation of additional points to developing countries, which should be read in the light of paragraph 3 (f) of the same part, concerning the phasing out of the scheme of limits over two three-year scale periods.

43. While the Fifth Committee acknowledged the need for the biennialization of its work, in order to give proper consideration to all issues, it felt that the importance of the scale of assessments warranted referral of three elements of the draft resolution, to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly for further consideration. He hoped, however, that in the near future the scale of assessments would no longer require consideration on an annual basis. He commended the draft resolution to the Committee for adoption without a vote.

44. Mr. THIRUNAGARAN (Singapore) said that his delegation had shared the spirit of consensus which had informed negotiations on the draft resolution but, nevertheless, wished to place on record its grave reservations concerning the suggested phasing out of the scheme of limits. Singapore regretted that the Committee was adopting the draft resolution before the Committee on Contributions had made relevant recommendations to the General Assembly, under the provisions of resolution 45/256. In its report (A/46/11), the Committee on Contributions had detailed its work on that matter and, noting its inability to complete that work owing to constraints of time, had declared that it was premature at the current stage to make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the preservation, abolition or modification of the scheme of limits. In the light of that assertion, Singapore believed that it was precipitate to consider phasing out the scheme of limits and felt that the Committee on Contributions should have been given adequate time to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

46. It was so decided.

47. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba), explaining her delegation's position on the draft resolution just adopted, said that while Cuba had joined the consensus, it had serious reservations concerning paragraph 2 of section B, dealing with the scheme of limits. She agreed with the comments made by the representative of Singapore concerning paragraph 62 of document A/46/11. In that light, paragraph 2 (a) was regrettable and should in no way prejudge the decision to be taken on the future of the scheme of limits. A final decision would be taken when the Committee on Contributions submitted its report at the forty-seventh session. The same considerations applied to paragraphs 3 (f) and 4.

48. Similarly, her delegation had reservations concerning paragraph 2 (c), which provided no specific guidelines on the debt problem. The formulation adopted should have taken into account the need for a genuine and definitive statement on that issue to be made at the forty-seventh session. Cuba hoped that the study to be submitted by the Committee on Contributions in 1992 would contain alternative proposals for determining the base period. Consideration should be given to reducing the base period in accordance with any change in the application of the scheme of limits. Her delegation also hoped that the Committee on Contributions would submit final proposals concerning the various elements in paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, since any decision on possible changes in the current methodology could be taken only after the views of the Committee on Contributions had been received.

49. Adequate support should be given to the Committee on Contributions so that it would be able to present a report at the forty-seventh session on all the elements in the draft resolution. Such support could take the form of extending the Committee's session, as it would be regrettable if the concerns of Member States could not be fully satisfied owing to lack of time.

50. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that he had serious reservations about the growing complexity of the methods used to determine the scale of assessments and strongly supported the fundamental principle of capacity to pay. Those reservations did not affect the position of the European Community on the scheme of limits and the gradient, or on the proposals which the Committee on Contributions would make in 1992. With regard to the position of developing countries, the European Community reaffirmed that national income was the main criterion in determining capacity to pay. He stressed the need for the Committee on Contributions to continue its work on developing alternative income concepts.

51. Mr. DINU (Romania) said that the negotiations on the resolution had been fraught with difficulty and had only succeeded thanks to the realization by delegations that they must accept one another's concerns, subordinate their individual interests and avoid seeking scapegoats. In that spirit, his delegation had not pressed its proposal concerning the period of a future illustrative scale, realizing that a fragile compromise could not be amended. His delegation remained convinced, however, of the merits of its proposal and intended to resubmit it at a later stage. It had gladly joined the consensus on the text and paid tribute to the representative of Ireland for his tact, patience, impartiality and skill in conducting the negotiations.

52. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that his delegation maintained its reservations concerning the concept of the mitigation process and on the way mitigation points had been distributed by the Committee on Contributions at the previous session. Tunisia would have liked to see in the draft resolution a paragraph conveying the concern of the General Assembly at the absence of any explanation on the issue of the distribution of mitigation points and would have liked to see, in part C of the draft resolution, a better reflection of the need for the Committee to hold informal meetings prior to the proposal of any new scale, in order to be fully aware of the situation of all Member States and to take into account relevant factors concerning not only the distribution of mitigation points, but also the establishment of a realistic scale.

53. Mr. SHIN (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution despite strong reservations concerning the proposed rate of assessment for his country. In his view, the principles of universality and fairness had been disregarded when the Committee on Contributions chose to ignore the hypothetical rate and the scheme of limits for the Republic of Korea. No argument presented during the informal consultations had persuaded his delegation of the contrary and on technical grounds it remained unable, therefore, to accept the Committee's proposed rate. However, in the spirit of international cooperation and consensus, the Republic of Korea had decided to accommodate the Committee in its recommendation, and it hoped that its contributions would be utilized in the best manner to further the noble objectives of the United Nations.

54. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) thanked the representative of Ireland for his efforts in coordinating the informal discussions on the scale of assessments, and reiterated that Algeria had always taken a positive and responsible attitude towards its contributions to the United Nations. However, the increase in Algeria's assessment did not seem fully justified in view of the country's increasingly difficult economic plight. Moreover, those elements of the draft resolution dealing with the scheme of limits seemed to be based on subjective political considerations rather than any technical recommendation clearly formulated by the Committee. For many developing countries, the level of their assessment, and therefore any change in that assessment, was a serious matter. There was no justification for a decision on the scheme of limits until the General Assembly had had a chance to take a position on recommendations of the Committee on Contributions.

55. The phasing out of the scheme of limits should be accompanied by specific provisions to avoid any penalty for the developing countries who had thus far benefited from the scheme.

56. In its work on improving the methodology, the Committee on Contributions should seek daring and innovative corrective measures so as to arrive at the fairest and most balanced scales of assessment possible, faithfully reflecting States' true capacity to pay. Its work should not be selective but should encompass all elements that might improve those methods.

57. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said that the negotiations on the scale of assessments had finally produced a good result in spite of the difficult circumstances, and that that success was in no small measure due to the efforts of the representative of Ireland.

58. Mr. AHMED (Iraq) said that his delegation's acquiescence in the consensus on draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.20 in no way meant that it agreed with all its provisions. Iraq's position on the increase in its assessment had not changed. He called on the Committee on Contributions to review the matter and to calculate Iraq's assessment in the light of its changed economic situation.

59. Iraq continued to have reservations regarding paragraphs 2 (a), 3 (f) and 4 of part B of the resolution, which dealt with the phasing out of the scheme of limits. Those paragraphs seemed to his delegation to be in contradiction to paragraph 62 of the Committee on Contributions' report (A/46/11). The Fifth Committee would have done better to wait for a final decision on the matter by the Committee on Contributions.

60. His delegation welcomed the statements of Algeria and Cuba.

61. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that his delegation had supported the draft resolution in a spirit of cooperation and in the interests of consensus. He understood that the General Assembly was asking the Committee on Contributions to study possible changes in methodology, as indicated in paragraph 3 of part B. Japan called on the Committee on Contributions to carry out that study with the utmost care and prudence.

62. Mr. AL-DOSARI (Bahrain) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution out of a desire to ensure the successful outcome of the Fifth Committee's work; however, it still had serious reservations as to the scale of assessments, in particular the increase in Bahrain's own assessment.

63. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) said that his delegation had strong reservations on the paragraphs dealing with the scheme of limits. Like other delegations, it thought that the plan to phase out the scheme of limits was premature, and hoped that the Committee on Contributions would be undertaking a study of the matter in the coming year.

64. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the contribution of each Member State should be based on its capacity to pay, but that that principle was distorted in practice by a number of elements. The draft resolution failed to address the problem of how to eliminate those distorting elements. The Soviet Union had nevertheless joined the consensus on the draft resolution in the full awareness that the Committee on Contributions would be guided in its work by the clearly expressed views of the General Assembly, particularly in regard to the phasing out of the scheme of limits, which was one of the main distorting factors.

65. Mr. BLUKIS (Latvia), speaking also on behalf of Lithuania and Estonia, said that all three Governments took their United Nations responsibilities seriously. Uncertainties remained with regard to their national budgets and they were studying ways of making contributions even before their assessment was formally established.

66. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that the consensus that had been reached based on the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions was fully supported by his delegation, and paid tribute to the representative of Ireland for his work in coordinating the draft resolution.

67. Mr. AL-ARIMI (Oman) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus on the resolution with some difficulty in view of the alarming increase of Oman's assessment.

68. His delegation had stated during the informal consultations on paragraph 2 (a) that for the time being the scheme of limits should not be abolished. It had repeatedly referred to paragraph 62 of the Committee on Contributions' report (A/46/11), which had stated that it was premature to abolish the scheme. Oman would not like to see the assessment of developing countries raised.

69. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) said that his delegation was far from satisfied with the decision just taken on the scale of assessments for two reasons. First, the method used to calculate the assessments of Member States was flawed and unfair to developing countries. Moreover, his delegation felt that the deliberations on the scale of assessments had not been aimed at improving that

(Mr. Duhalt, Mexico)

situation. Secondly, some elements in the procedure by which the Committee on Contributions had set the scale just adopted seemed at odds with previous decisions of the General Assembly. His delegation hoped that Member States' views would be taken into account in that regard in future.

70. The CHAIRMAN paid tribute to the representative of Ireland and to all delegates who had taken part in the informal discussions and had done their best to achieve consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 105: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.16

71. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland) said that in the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.20, she would like to propose an amendment to the programme of work for 1992 contained in the annex to draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.16: a new item 9, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations" would be added after the existing item 8.

72. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) asked whether the proposed addition would result in the elimination of part D of the annex to the draft resolution, which also dealt with the scale of assessments.

73. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland) said that it would not.

74. The draft resolution was adopted.

75. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that his delegation considered the draft resolution just adopted a step forward, but thought that biennialization in itself was not enough; other points to be considered included the length of the session, the scheduling of formal and informal discussions, inter-sessional contacts, and assistance and briefing of delegates by the Secretariat.

76. His delegation considered that the work that had been begun by the Committee should be actively pursued so as to make the work of the Fifth Committee more efficient and productive.

The meeting rose at 2.25 p.m.